

AUG 20 1973

Memo from

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

To: Mr. H H Sherley

AUG 23 1973

I have never suggested that Jensen should be dismissed, nor that his books should be suppressed! I think Professor Jensen himself has a rather clear idea of my position about his work, and you might consult him directly whether he thinks I am trying to suppress it.

I have criticized efforts to present the problem of black disadvantage as if there were reliable evidence that this generally has a genetic basis. Unlike many of my colleagues I do not say that it has been scientifically determined that the differences in performance are entirely environmental. So I have pointed out all the problems of reaching reliable scientific conclusions, and my opinion is that the question is undecideable: no kind of evidence that is likely to be produced in the near future is going to shake anyone's convictions or previous prejudices.

Then I have said that it is vicious to drag such a vague and undecideable area of genetic science into the crossfire of racial antagonism. It will only increase the mutual hatred of blacks and whites, and a scientist ought to be very cautious about advertising his conclusions if they are inherently so uncertain, and can have such a harmful consequence. I do not criticize I.Q. tests so much as the idea that we understand the environmental factors that can influence I.Q. or that we have done enough to try to improve learning by those whose fallibility behind is so costly to us all.

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